



MORTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

Kyle L. Kirchmeier, Sheriff



News Release

For Immediate Release

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Contact: Morton County PIO (701) 426-1587

Morton County Leads Investigation into Circumstances Surrounding 9/3/16 Protest

Mandan, N.D. – A joint task force led by the Morton County Sheriff's Department is examining the circumstances surrounding a protest that took place south of Mandan September 3rd, 2016. The investigation includes a focus on those hired by Dakota Access Pipeline to provide private security services on that day, whether or not they were licensed, and their actions. The task force is also exploring whether or not native artifacts were disturbed at the worksite. In addition, the investigative team is reviewing the actions of the protesters.

"This task force is an investigative tool comprised of law enforcement and detectives with specific areas of expertise to gather, evaluate and possibly prosecute for crimes. I am using all tools possible to insure this investigation is carried out with no bias toward Dakota Access Pipeline nor the pipeline protestors," said Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier.

The task force is made up of members from Morton and Mercer County Sheriff's Department, Bureau of Criminal Investigation and Bureau of Indian Affairs. There is no timeline for when the investigation will be complete.

September 3rd, Morton County deputies responded to a report of protesters in a DAPL worksite located on private property west of Highway 1806. DAPL private security officers with dogs were at the worksite. Protesters broke through a fence and entered the site. Several security officers reported being attacked by protesters during the confrontation. Seven individuals have been identified and charged with criminal trespass for their involvement in the protest that day.

Kirchmeier added, "It is important we give this incident a thorough examination. Law enforcement was not present on the scene during the confrontation and there have been allegations on both sides of this issue. Again, I can't stress it enough, the safety of all citizens is paramount. Morton County along with BCI continue to investigate all protest related incidents."

The Morton County Sheriff's Department is soliciting additional information regarding the incident at the DAPL worksite on that day. Contact the Sheriff's Department at (701) 667-3330 with information.

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